

## **Randolph Street Commercial Buildings Historic District**

1208-1244 Randolph Street

Local

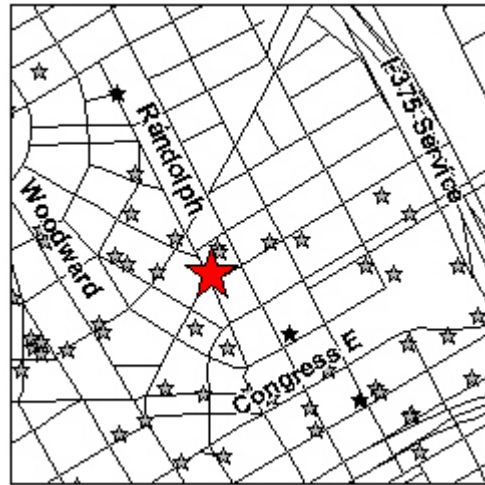
State

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1228-34 Randolph



### **Historic overview:**

The Randolph Street Commercial Buildings are a rare surviving Victorian streetscape in the heart of Detroit's retail district. Randolph Street has been a center of retail activity since it was first settled in the 1840s. The building on the corner of Macomb is a remnant of this period. Over the succeeding decades, as the city spread north, the demand for retail space prompted the construction of larger commercial structures that remain on Randolph. The area flourished as a shopping district into the twentieth century, and escaped the wholesale rebuilding that occurred in other areas such as Woodward Avenue and the financial district.

Although the buildings were continuously altered over the years at the first floor level and two structures had new top stories added, they retained their characteristic Victorian brickwork and metal window hoods. Unfortunately, a city-sponsored cornice removal program in the 1950s resulted in the loss of all the fine bracketed entablatures on Randolph Street as well as most of the other wood or metal cornices in the city.

Over the years the Randolph Street Commercial Buildings have housed a great variety of commercial enterprises, ranging from legal offices, to tailors to sculptors. By the early 1900s, dry goods and clothing establishments dominated the area, and today is one of Detroit's most viable retail clothing markets. The practice of bartering that disappeared with the fixed price department stores of the late 1800s still operates in the clothing and shoe stores in the district. Randolph Street Commercial District is unique to downtown Detroit and an ongoing part of Detroit's commercial and social history.